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Panel on Transport
Meeting on 19 May 2017

Background brief on parking policy

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Government's parking policy and measures to alleviate the shortage of parking spaces. It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the subject.

Background

Prevailing policy on parking

2. The Government's prevailing policy in the provision of parking spaces is to accord priority in considering and meeting the parking demand of commercial vehicles. In respect of parking for private cars, the Administration has all along pointed out that given the scarce land resources in Hong Kong, it cannot accommodate the growing private car fleet by providing parking spaces continuously. Meanwhile, the Administration has been studying various means to curb the growth of private cars. With a transport policy centred on public transport, an appropriate number of parking spaces for private cars would still be provided if the overall development permits, but such should not attract passengers of public transport to opt for private cars instead, thereby aggravating road traffic congestion.

3. As at end-January 2017, the total number of licensed vehicles (excluding trailers and government vehicles) in Hong Kong is 742 199. The number of parking spaces (including public parking spaces provided by the Government, parking spaces at privately operated car parks for public use, and parking spaces exclusively for individual private use) is about 745 000. A breakdown of parking spaces by vehicle type and district is in **Appendix I**.

Review of the parking policy

4. On invitation of the Administration, the Transport Advisory Committee ("TAC") submitted the "Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong" in December 2014,¹ and recommended 12 short, medium and long-term measures to tackle road traffic congestion. Among the measures, TAC has recommended the Administration to conduct a detailed review of the parking policy, in which various stakeholders and the general public should be fully engaged. Besides, TAC considers that the Administration should examine how to provide motorists with real-time information on the vacancies in off-street car parks nearby, so as to reduce the need for motorists to circulate on roads looking for available parking spaces and causing more congestion.

5. In the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive indicated that to tackle road traffic congestion, the Administration has adopted a multi-pronged approach, and has been taking forward progressively the measures recommended by TAC. Among others, the Administration will commence a car parking review with priority accorded to addressing the parking demand and supply of commercial vehicles within 2017 to come up with appropriate measures to address the parking need of commercial vehicles.

6. In the above connection, the Transport Department ("TD") will commence a consultancy study on parking for commercial vehicles in 2017, and has earmarked \$1.8 million in 2017-2018 financial year for the study fee. The study is expected to last for two years. In the light of the results, the Administration will examine appropriate measures, including updating standards related to the parking spaces for commercial vehicles as stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("Planning Guidelines") if necessary.

Major views and concerns of Members

7. In the Fifth and Sixth LegCo, members expressed concerns about the Government's parking policy and measures to address the shortage of parking spaces at meetings of the Panel on Transport ("the Panel"). Relevant issues were also discussed by members of the Subcommittee formed under the House Committee ("HC") to scrutinize two proposed resolutions that seek to increase the fixed penalty charges for traffic offences under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) and certain traffic offences under the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance (Cap. 240). Council questions were also raised on relevant matters. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

¹ Available at http://www.thb.gov.hk/eng/boards/transport/land/Full_Eng_C_cover.pdf

Shortage of parking spaces

For commercial vehicles

8. Members of the Panel pointed out that due to the lack of parking facilities and proper loading/unloading bays, some good vehicles drivers were forced to park their vehicles by the roadside. The lack of parking bays along the roads also posed occupational safety concerns for workers as they could not load or unload goods within the shortest distance. Members also pointed out that many drivers of commercial vehicles, including school buses and nanny vans, had to park the vehicles by their own means and at their own costs, and many of them used to park at open air parking lots on brownfield sites. Yet many of these sites had been used for housing developments in recent years. For nanny vans, the shortage of suitable light bus parking spaces was getting very serious, given the increase in the number of nanny vans in recent years. Many nanny van drivers had to park their vehicles illegally by the roadside. In this regard, the Administration indicated that some mismatches of parking provision for commercial vehicles in some areas were noted.

9. Some members pointed out that the shortage of parking spaces was particularly acute in the vicinity of popular tourist hotspots. To make things worse, the operation of several temporary car parks for commercial vehicles within the Kai Tak Development Area ceased, following the progressive implementation of the Kai Tak Development. The shortage of parking spaces for tourist coaches aggravated the problem of traffic congestion in certain areas. In this regard, members noted from the information provided by the Administration in April 2017 about the continuing efforts of TD to increase the supply of parking spaces and loading/unloading bays for coaches in particular at tourist spots and attractions, such as the provision of 83 additional on-street parking spaces and seven loading/unloading bays for coaches across Hong Kong in the past three years.

For private cars

10. Commercial vehicles aside, some Panel members expressed concern over the shortage of parking spaces for private cars and considered that the Administration should also review the policy on provision of parking spaces for private cars as well. Members queried about the adoption of the same provision standard of parking spaces for both public-funded and private housing estates, which in their views, had resulted in a surplus of parking spaces in some public-funded housing estates whereas a shortage of parking spaces in some private housing estates. Members were also concerned about mismatches of the demand and supply of parking spaces in some districts, even though according to the Administration the overall number of parking spaces exceeded

the number of vehicles in Hong Kong. Hence, they urged the Administration to review the provision standard of parking spaces in Hong Kong.

11. Some members also pointed out that due to land resumption by the Administration to increase the supply of residential units, the number of available sites that were being used as temporary car parks had been decreasing. In response, the Administration indicated that it had spared no effort to balance the needs of housing, social and economic developments in light of scarce land resources in Hong Kong.

12. Likewise, members were of grave concern that for the purpose of redevelopments, many public car park buildings, such as Yau Ma Tei Multi-storey Carpark ("YMTMCP"), Middle Road Car Park in Tsim Sha Tsui, and Murray Road Multi-storey Carpark, Star Ferry Carpark and Rumsey Street Carpark in Central and Western District, would be demolished. This would critically aggravate the shortage of car parking spaces in the districts.

13. In response, the Administration explained that before the demolition of a public car park building, the Administration would conduct a traffic impact assessment to review the demand for parking facilities in the area concerned and determine the number of parking spaces to be reprovisioned. It would make reference to the Planning Guidelines in planning for the provision of parking spaces. For example, before demolishing YMTMCP to facilitate construction of the Central Kowloon Route, the Administration would provide other parking spaces in short-term tenancy car parks in the vicinity. On this, a site currently used as a temporary public transport interchange ("PTI") at the junction of Jordan Road/Lin Cheung Road was being planned for parking use after the temporary PTI was relocated and the site vacated following the commissioning of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou—Shenzhen—Hong Kong Express Rail Link. However, members were still worried that as the number of parking spaces to be reprovisioned after demolition of existing public car park buildings would be fewer than originally provided, the parking needs in the districts concerned would unlikely be met.

For motorcycles

14. Some members were also concerned about the inadequacy of parking spaces for motorcycles, and the problem of abandoned motorcycles occupying on-street parking spaces. At the Panel meeting on 28 October 2016, some members urged the Administration to also review the policy on provision of parking spaces for motorcycles. According to the Administration, from 2006 to 2016, the number of motorcycles had increased by about 40%, meanwhile the number of parking spaces for motorcycles had also increased by about the same percentage. Apart from designated parking spaces, some motorcycles were

also parked at non-designated parking spaces that would not affect traffic flow, for example, inside private housing estates and private garages. The Administration also advised that the Police would take actions regarding abandoned motorcycles occupying on-street parking spaces.

Measures to alleviate the shortage of parking spaces

15. Members considered it necessary for the Administration to put in place specific measures to address the shortage of parking spaces expeditiously. In response to a Council question on 4 November 2015, the Administration indicated that TD would implement measures in a timely manner to increase the number of parking spaces. Such measures included, requiring the provision of an appropriate number of public parking spaces in suitable private development projects through land grant conditions; maintaining close contact with relevant departments to identify suitable sites for use as temporary car parks as far as possible and when necessary; monitoring the utilization of temporary car parks and designating some short-term tenancy temporary car parks for exclusive use by certain vehicle classes; and providing additional on-street parking spaces as appropriate.

16. Members were particularly concerned about the progress and details of the Administration's scheme of increasing the number of on-street overnight commercial vehicle parking spaces. The Administration explained that TD had been implementing such scheme since 2015-2016. During the two years since the implementation of the scheme, TD had actively identified 318 on-street overnight commercial vehicle parking spaces and was consulting the local communities in phases. As at February 2017, of these 318 proposed on-street overnight commercial vehicle parking spaces, 47 had to be shelved due to local objections, 94 were undergoing local consultation in phases and 38 were in the process of dealing with opposing views collected during the consultation period. TD had currently provided 82 additional on-street overnight commercial vehicle parking spaces, of which 72 were for goods vehicles and 10 for buses. In addition, TD had completed the planning work for 57 on-street overnight commercial vehicle parking spaces.

17. Members also urged the Administration to step up efforts in the provision of real-time parking vacancy information to the public through the use of advanced technology. In this regard, they noted that TD had been liaising with the operators of commercial public car parks to encourage them to open up their car park information and vacancy data so that interested organizations or parties could make use of the data on the portal at "data.gov.hk" to develop

applications;² and updated the Hong Kong eRouting smartphone application in 2016 to disseminate real-time parking data of about 50 car parks (including government car parks) to help motorists search for parking spaces. TD had planned to upload the parking vacancy data of government car parks in the Hong Kong eRouting smartphone application to the "data.gov.hk" website in mid-2017.

Proposed increase in the fixed penalty charges for Congestion-Related Traffic Offences

18. To take forward the recommendation of TAC to raise the fixed penalty charges for Congestion-Related Traffic Offences with a view to restoring the deterrent effect being eroded by inflation since the last adjustment in 1994,³ the Administration had proposed to increase the relevant fixed penalty charges by 50%. When the Panel was briefed on the Administration's proposal in the last legislative session of 2015-2016, members expressed grave concern about the inadequate provision of parking spaces for commercial vehicles, which allegedly left some drivers with no choice but to park the vehicles illegally, and insufficient enforcement actions taken by the Police against illegal parking. A motion was passed at the meeting on 16 December 2015 that "this Panel opposes the Government raising the level of parking fines when the mismatch of parking spaces remains unsolved and law enforcement is lacking in strength".

19. Subsequently in February 2017, the Secretary for Transport and Housing gave notice to move two proposed resolutions seeking to increase the fixed penalty charges for Congestion-Related Traffic Offences under Cap. 237 and Cap. 240 by 50% with effect from 1 June 2018.⁴ At the first meeting of the Subcommittee formed under HC to scrutinize the two proposed resolutions held on 21 March 2017, members generally expressed disappointment about the Administration's broad-brush approach to increase the fixed-penalty charges for all Congestion-Related Traffic Offences before conducting the parking policy review and in the absence of effective means to address the serious shortage of parking spaces. They urged the Administration to conduct the parking policy

² "data.gov.hk" is an online web interface provided by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to the public for obtaining certain public sector information for commercial or non-commercial purposes free-of-charges. The datasets are provided by various government departments, and public and private organizations.

³ Congestion-Related Traffic Offences herein referred to the offences under Cap. 237 and six offences of Cap. 240 (viz items 9, 12, 13, 18, 20 and 48 of the Schedule to Cap. 240). Such contraventions include illegal parking, loading/unloading goods or picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zones, etc.

⁴ At the request of HC, STH withdrew his notice for moving the two proposed resolutions to allow time for the Subcommittee to study the two proposed resolutions in detail.

review as soon as possible and cover both commercial vehicles and private cars in the review. They objected to increasing the fixed penalty charges for those parking-related offences as many drivers, in particular those of commercial vehicles, were forced to park illegally due to a lack of parking spaces.

Latest position

20. The Administration plans to brief members on the Government's parking policy and the measures to alleviate the shortage of parking spaces at the Panel meeting to be held on 19 May 2017.

Relevant papers

21. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 May 2017

Number of parking spaces by vehicle type and district

District	Motor-cycles	Private cars ¹	Light goods vehicles ²	Medium/heavy goods vehicles	Container vehicles	Coaches/buses	Others	Total
Sha Tin	2 768	70 328	2 045	619	57	213	39	76 069
Kwun Tong	3 779	45 539	2 666	1 453	65	353	28	53 883
Eastern	2 504	48 703	1 527	643	30	388	37	53 832
Kowloon City	1 750	48 603	1 269	392	2	861	44	52 921
Kwai Tsing	2 614	35 418	2 908	3 514	4 170	321	32	48 977
Tuen Mun	1 614	39 868	1 507	849	178	175	11	44 202
Sai Kung	2 746	38 803	985	535	29	368	109	43 575
Yuen Long	1 554	39 594	1 356	457	194	328	30	43 513
Southern	1 810	38 801	894	307	3	279	38	42 132
Central & Western	1 362	38 779	1 000	197	22	88	42	41 490
Tsuen Wan	1 230	34 966	1 266	569	84	396	38	38 549
Yau Tsim Mong	2 007	32 892	2 157	245	29	251	77	37 658
Wan Chai	1 018	34 856	88	55	0	118	50	36 185
Sham Shui Po	1 800	28 495	2 265	790	167	472	45	34 034
Tai Po	955	28 357	956	358	5	141	22	30 794
Wong Tai Sin	2 211	21 077	1 177	102	2	136	28	24 733
North	778	21 464	1 330	452	53	79	31	24 187
Islands	516	16 472	180	614	33	233	8	18 056
Total	33 016	663 015	25 576	12 151	5 123	5 200	709	744 790

Source: Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2017-2018 (Question Serial No.: 2435)

¹ Private car parking spaces can be used by private cars, taxis as well as van-type light goods vehicles, light goods vehicles and light buses with such sizes that can be accommodated within the private car parking spaces.

² Excluding van-type light goods vehicles that can be parked at private car parking spaces.

Background brief on parking policy

List of relevant papers

Date of meeting	Panel/ Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
3.12.2014	Council meeting	Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming raised a question on parking spaces for school private light buses	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201412/03/P201412020812.htm
11.2.2015	Council meeting	Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen raised a question on supply of parking spaces	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201502/11/P201502110407.htm
12.5.2015	Panel on Transport ("TP")	Administration's paper	CB(4)922/14-15(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20150512cb4-922-4-e.pdf
		Minutes of the meeting	CB(4)85/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20150512.pdf
24.6.2015	Council meeting	Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming raised a question on parking facilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201506/24/P201506240562.htm
4.11.2015	Council meeting	Hon CHAN Han-pan raised a question on provision of parking spaces	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201511/04/P201511040664.htm

Date of meeting	Panel/ Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
16.12.2015	TP	Administration's paper	CB(4)344/15-16(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20151216cb4-344-3-e.pdf
		Background brief	CB(4)344/15-16(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20151216cb4-344-4-e.pdf
		Follow-up paper	CB(4)1065/15-16(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20151216cb4-1065-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of the meeting	CB(4)1270/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20151216.pdf
5.1.2016	TP	Minutes of the meeting	CB(4)1277/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20160105.pdf
6.1.2016	Council meeting	Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming raised a question on parking facilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201601/06/P201601060439.htm
20.1.2016	Council meeting	Hon WONG Kwok-kin raised a question on provision of parking spaces and enforcement actions against illegal parking	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201601/20/P201601200570.htm
11.5.2016	Council meeting	Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen raised a question on parking facilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201605/11/P201605110446.htm

Date of meeting	Panel/ Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
2.11.2016	Council meeting	Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming raised a question on parking spaces for school private light buses	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201611/02/P2016110200677.htm
20.1.2017	TP	Administration's paper	CB(4)413/16-17(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20170120cb4-413-3-e.pdf
21.3.2017	Subcommittee on Two Proposed Resolutions under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance and the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance	Minutes of the meeting	CB(4)918/16-17 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/hc/sub_leg/sc106/minutes/sc10620170321.pdf
		Follow-up paper	CB(4)932/16-17(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/hc/sub_leg/sc106/papers/sc10620170505cb4-932-2-e.pdf
5.4.2017	Finance Committee (Special meeting)	Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2017-2018 (Session No.: 13) (Questions Serial Nos. 0481, 0738, 0748, 0797, 0830, 0984, 1061, 1070, 1975, 2331, 2345, 2909, 3235, 3465 and 6508)	http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/fc/fc/w_q/thb-t-e.pdf